

THE ABRUZZO AND MOLISE HERITAGE SOCIETY

of the Washington, DC Area

Celebrating Italian Culture & Community since 2000

www.abruzzomoliseheritagesociety.org

July 2017



Left: Guest speaker and AMHS member Domenica Marchetti and AMHS 1st VP-Programs Nancy DeSanti showcasing books published by Domenica at the May 21 meeting.

Right (top): Domenica Marchetti talks about Abruzzese cooking traditions. **Right (bottom):** Nancy DeSanti, AMHS Past President Omero Sabatini, and AMHS President Maria D'Andrea-Yothers with Dom Serafini of "Il Messagero" magazine, a "meet and greet" at Casa Italiana (see details in Siamo una Famiglia). *(photos courtesy of Joe Novello & Maria D'Andrea-Yothers).*

NEXT SOCIETY EVENT The next AMHS general Society meeting will be held on **Sunday**, **July 23**, **2017** at 1:00pm at Casa Italiana. Author Catherine Wilson to talk about "Only in Naples". *See inside for details*.

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Cari amici,



I hope everyone is enjoying their summer so far, with grand adventures here or abroad, with family and friends. Personally (at what I hope will be the printing of this issue), I will have returned from Italy on July 3, after spending a week in Agnone, Molise studying at the

program Live and Learn Italian, whose Executive Director, Jenifer Landor, is a great friend and sponsor of AMHS. Following my studies in Agnone, I will travel to Puglia, back to Molise, to visit with my father's family, and then to Rome. What makes this trip extra special is that I will be traveling with a fellow *Molisano*, and a long-time AMHS member and current Board member, Albert Paolantonio. We will write about our "grand Italian adventure" in a future issue of the *Notiziario*.

As many of you know, the Society does not take a break over the summer, as we continue our practice of holding two events: a general Society meeting, which is scheduled this year on July 23 at Casa Italiana; and the Ferragosto picnic, scheduled for Sunday, August 13. Please be sure to read more about both of these events elsewhere in the *Notiziario*.

This September will mark the two- year anniversary of the Society's formal affiliation with the National Italian American Foundation (NIAF). The Society's Executive Committee (EC) will be undertaking a review of our affiliation - benefits to and for us, as well as for the larger Italian American community. By the end of this month, the EC will vote on whether to recommend that the Society affiliate with NIAF for a second year. The membership will be asked to vote at the September general Society meeting. Prior to this vote, you will be apprised of the EC recommendation and any other information relevant to allow you to make an informed decision. The issue of NIAF affiliation will need to be addressed each year, as the cost for affiliation is \$2,500 per year - a cost which is not taken lightly by us but that ultimately must be approved by the membership. For the members who are new to AMHS, one of the key benefits of affiliation with NIAF is that it allows our Society to continue to receive matching scholarship funds from NIAF, and have NIAF manage the scholarship application process according to criteria established by AMHS.

This year also marks the end of the terms of office for President, 1^{st} and 2^{nd} Vice Presidents, Treasurer, and three members of the Board. A nominating committee has been established, which will undertake the vetting of candidates for these positions. If you are approached by the committee to serve in any capacity, I hope that you will keep an open mind and recognize the positive contributions you can make to the effective operation of the Society. If you don't want to serve as an officer or member of the Board, do consider helping with one of our standing committees – there are several that

could use help, specifically the Hospitality, Travel, and Social committees. We are forever grateful for your support; and we welcome any contribution you can make!

I hope everyone enjoys a happy and relaxing summer, and I look forward to seeing you at the Society's upcoming events.

Cordiali saluti,

Maria

UPCOMING SOCIETY EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

AUTHOR KATHERINE WILSON TO TALK ABOUT "ONLY IN NAPLES" AT JULY 23, 2017 PROGRAM By Nancy DeSanti, AMHS 1st Vice President - Programs



Author Katherine Wilson has a delightful story to tell and you can hear all about it at our fourth program of the year, which will be on July 23, 2017, at 1:00 p.m. in Casa Italiana. Katherine will talk about her life-changing experience when she first went to Naples, as a recent college graduate who planned to spend a few months there but ended up falling in love with a local guy.

And, she fell in love with his family, especially the glamorous, wise woman who was to become her mother-in-law, and then fell in love with the city of Naples itself.

The author quotes Goethe as saying "see Naples and die," to which she says, "I saw Naples and started to live." She said she moved past the stereotypes of Naples and saw the chaotic, vibrant energy which she describes with humor and insight, in a way that reflects her training as a dramatic stage actress.

It's been 19 years since Katherine first went to Italy, where she lives now with her husband and children and where she works in television, film and stage. While she is visiting her mother here, we will have the opportunity to hear her talk about her amazing adventures which she writes about in her book "Only in Naples: Lessons in Food and Famiglia from My Italian Mother-in-Law" (now published in paperback as "The Mother-in-Law Cure"). Copies of the book will be available for signing at the end of the meeting.

Katherine's talk will be preceded by a delicious lunch catered by one of everybody's favorites, Osteria da Nino, with an opportunity to enjoy good food, good music and camaraderie with your family members and friends. The delicious menu will include two appetizers -- arancini di riso (a Sicilian specialty) and cavolini di bruxelles croccante (crispy Brussels sprouts in beet puree and pistachios), pollo al funghi & florio Marsala, orecchiette salsiccio & broccoli rabe, Arborio risotto con asparagi & piselli, focaccia bread with basil pesto, mixed salad, and for dessert, Sicilian cannoli made with ricotta, pistachio, chocolate and candy orange peel. Beverages are included.

A raffle will be conducted with some wonderful prizes, the proceeds of which benefit the AMHS/NIAF scholarships. So please plan to join us for what we are sure will be a wonderful an afternoon. Your early reservations, by check or online via the AMHS website, would be very much appreciated. The deadline for paid reservations is July 19, 2017. We look forward to seeing you!!

THE ANNUAL AMHS FERRAGOSTO PICNIC SUNDAY, AUGUST 13 *By Maria D'Andrea-Yothers*

We are very pleased to announce that we will be moving the venue and the time for the Society's annual Ferragosto picnic. This year, the picnic will be held at Fort Ward Park in Alexandria, VA from 3:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. The Park is actually an historical Civil War site (the Fort Ward Museum and Historical site, which, according to the Park's website is "the best preserved of the system of Union forts and batteries built to protect Washington, DC during the American Civil War"). We were able to reserve a covered pavilion with the City of Alexandria Parks and Recreation. The pavilion space includes 9 picnic tables and one charcoal grill. Within a short walk from the pavilion are (less than 3 minutes) is a playground and two enclosed restrooms. There is also ample parking space.

The event is free and open to all, rain or shine. As in prior years, AMHS will provide beverages (water, wine, and beer which, according to our ABC license, can only be drunk from kegs in plastic cups). We only ask members, friends, family to bring a basket of food to share, paper products and utensils, and Italian cards. You may also want to bring lawn chairs and a personal portable grill, so long as it is charcoal only. We will be able to play some music on a "boombox", so bring your favorite Italian songs. Unfortunately we won't have access to a bocce court but we will find lots of ways to have fun and enjoy the day with food, wine and friendship. We hope you all can join us! For additional details, please see flyer in this issue of the *Notiziario*.

RECENT SOCIETY EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

DOMENICA MARCHETTI HIGHLIGHTS ABRUZZESE CULINARY HERITAGE By Nancy DeSanti

Our 3rd program this year, on May 21, 2017, featured a wonderful, very informative talk by chef and AMHS member Domenica Marchetti. About 45 members and guests met at Carmine's restaurant to hear Domenica tell us about her life as a chef, author, blogger and businesswoman and on top of that,

she still finds time to lead culinary tours to Abruzzo, known as the home of many famous cooks (as Romeo Sabatini likes to remind us).

Although she has a journalism degree from Columbia University and worked as a reporter, Domenica said she realized early on that she was not going to be "the next Woodward or Bernstein." So she made a career change to where her real interests lay—her passion for cooking and for passing that on to the world.

She grew up in an Italian family where at the dinner table she said they spent more time talking about what they should eat the next night than about politics or the news of the day. She said her mother had her shaping gnocchi and ravioli by the time she could see over the kitchen counter.

Domenica's mother is from Chieti, her grandmother was from Isernia and her father was from Perugia. She remembers spending summers in Abruzzo near Gran Sasso and at a house at the seashore withviews of the *trabocchi* and enjoying wonderful seafood. She spent summers in Abruzzo with her mother's three sisters who were all great cooks. So it's not surprising that Domenica says Italian home cooking is her first passion in the kitchen. As she observes, food is at the center of Italian family life and she has said it feels like she has probably spent the equivalent of half her hours on this earth in kitchens and around dinner tables, cooking, eating, talking, arguing, and socializing. She says the food she cooks is the food she loves to eat and feed others--simple, honest dishes that reflect her heritage and the seasons.

While in Abruzzo, she learned to make *spaghetti alla chitarra* and she now has the *chitarra* her mother got at her wedding. She explained how the type of pasta called *mugnaia* is made in big loops. She said in her opinion some of the best porchetta is made in Abruzzo (so apparently Joe Novello comes by his porchetta-making skills honestly). She recalls the trucks in the piazza selling the porchetta on certain days of the week, and if you got there early, you could get the pig's ears.

Domenica had a wonderful slide presentation and shared with us some personal stories about her travels in the various regions of Italy, where she pointed out that everywhere there is a plot of land, something is growing, and there is still a desire to preserve the cooking traditions.

She visited an organic olive oil pressing operation and showed us how they do things the old-school way—turning the press with a blindfolded donkey so the donkey wouldn't realize it was going around and around. On a trip to Genoa, she visited the "pesto king" who travels around the world with a mortar and pestle to teach people the proper way to make pesto, and who sponsors a pesto-making contest. He took her to the hills near Genoa to see basil growing, and she went to a basil farm, which was all terraced. Of course Liguria is famous for its pesto. He explained there should be 4-6 leaves on each stem and they must be tender and, very importantly, fresh and not old. As always throughout Italy, the key is recognizing the importance of fresh ingredients. In Piemonte, she found a couple who preserves such delicacies as peppers stuffed with tuna and olive oil jam. In Campania, she visited a farm where organic tomatoes are grown and they are so beautiful, they look like Christmas tree lights. Then she visited another farm where everything is automated and stateof-the-art, where the buffalo get massages with bristle brushes, and each buffalo has a microchip. Yet making the mozzarella is all old-school, done by hand. They also make buffalo yogurt, and even buffalo gelato!! And everything is sold out by noon; nothing is shipped or distributed in order to ensure freshness.

Domenica is the author of seven books, beginning with the "Glorious Pasta of Italy." She also wrote "Ciao Biscotti," after realizing that instead of just one recipe for biscotti, she actually found 50.

In Domenica's latest book, "Preserving Italy," she recounts her travels across the regions of Italy as well as the recipes handed down through her family--sweet and sour peppers, Marsala-spiked apricot jam, lemon-infused olive oil, and her grandmother's amarene, sour cherries preserved in alcohol.

After her talk, Domenica chatted with audience members who wished to get signed copies of her books and then she graciously sat with audience members for a while to answer their questions and talk with them about their own culinary experiences.

Domenica's books can be ordered from Amazon or else from her website (<u>www.domenicacooks.com</u>) which has a wealth of interesting information.

She kindly donated a copy of her book, "Big Night In" as a raffle prize at our July 23 meeting.

AMHS MEMBERSHIP

By Lynn Sorbara, 2nd Vice President - Membership

I am pleased to report that there are 292 members of AMHS, including many new members. Thank you for your continued support of the Society's programs and activities. We have many wonderful events planned for the rest of the year and your membership makes them all possible!

As a reminder, with our new automated system, you will receive email reminders when it is time to renew. If you do not have email, you will receive a reminder by regular mail.

New Members

A warm welcome to our newest members! Louis Alfano, Francis (Frank) & Susan Ann Bonsiero, Michael & Naomi DiSylvester, Thomas and Jana Monaco, Christy Eva Nash (Saccomandi), Helina (Ellie) Zewdu Nega, and Mike Savino.

Compleanni

Compleanni a Luglio

Amy Profit D'Amico, July 1; Vincenzo Marinucci, July 3; Vincent Trasatti, July 4; Dianne Francesconi Lyon, July 6; John Verna, July 7; Antoniette Mazziotti, July 9; Raymond Bernero, and Salvatore Pitino, July 12; David Ciummo, July 13; Michael Corrado, July 14; Anthony D'Onofrio, and Helina (Ellie) Zewdu Nega, July 15, Angelo Puglisi, Ines Sozio, July 17; Nancy Hurst, July 18; Matthew DiFiore, and Roberto Severino, July 19; Mario Ciccone, July 21; Adelfina Santini, July 25; Lina Pronio, July 26; Lynn Sorbara, July 27; and Stephen Furry, July 29.

Compleanni ad Agosto

Mario Marinucci, August 2; Linda Ciocci, and Daniela Di Tullio, August 3; Ray LaVerghetta, August 5; Antoinette Bacik and Silvana DeLuca, August 6; Loretta Pittarelli, August 9; Nancy DeSanti, August 15; Joseph Ruzzi, Sr., August 16; Henry Colletto, August 17; Rose Ruzzi, August 18; Angela Campanella, August 21; Robert Lucian and Joseph Novello, August 23; Marilyn Huffman, August 25; Anthony Frato, August 27; Nicholas D. Rossi, and Katie Musolino, August 28; Martha Harris, August 29; Donna Caruso, August 30; and Rosa Mazziotti, August 31.

Anniversari

<u>Anniversari a Luglio</u>

Joseph & Joann B. Novello, July 4; David Andrew & Karen DiGiovanni, July 6; Peter & Charlie Iovino, July 14; Sabatino & Antoniette Mazziotti, Renato & Rita Orcino, July 19; Greg & Diana Bernabei, July 21; Stephen diGirolamo & Christine Smith, July 25; Stephan & Rita Carrier, Domenico & Adelfina Santini, July 30, and David Ciummo & Sabrina DeSousa, July 31.

Anniversari ad Agosto

Paul &Katie Fazioli, August 1; Roger & Maryann Martella, August 2; Joseph & Pam Lupo, and Samuel and Margherita Amatucci, August 5; Pasquale & Filomena Santini, and Corrado Dal Forno & Julie Finigan-Dal Forno, August 7; Jack & Virginia Paganelli, August 10; Domenico & Julia Conti, August 19; and Guy & Donna Caruso, August 26; and Rial & Sandra Coleman, August 31.

SIAMO UNA FAMIGLIA

AMHS TO BE FEATURED IN ABRUZZO "IL MESSAGGERO"

On Sunday, June 11, a group of AMHS members, all with roots in the region of Abruzzo, met with Dom Serafini, a contributing writer to the Abruzzo "*Il Messaggero*" newspaper. The meeting took place at 10:00 a.m. in Casa Italiana. Dom is responsible for writing about *Abruzzesi* who reside outside the region of Abruzzo. He is going to write a small piece on the Society for the front page of this newspaper!

Present at the meeting were two founding members of the Society, Omero Sabatini and Sergio Fresco, in addition to Nancy DeSanti, Joe Novello, and myself. We were very proud to share with Dom the history of the Society from its founding in June 2000, and the numerous events and activities that the Society sponsors each year, e.g., 6 general Society meetings, a Ferragosto picnic, the awarding of two scholarships, and the bi-monthly publication of the *AMHS*

Notiziario. Dom was also very interested in the history of Casa Italiana – he met Father Ezio Marchetto, Pastor of Holy Rosary Church, who gave Dom a copy of the history of the Church. All in all it was a wonderful "meet and greet". Thank you to AMHS member Francesco Isgro for putting Dom in touch with us! (*submitted by Maria D'Andrea-Yothers*).

POTENTIAL NEW MEMBER



Rosemary "Rosie" Day DeBonis was born on April 21 to our members Mike DeBonis and Dena Iverson DeBonis. Mother and daughter are doing great and Mike's excitement by now has calmed down to the level of mere fatherly pride.

Rosemary's middle name, Day, is actually the family name of her maternal great grandmother who traced her ancestry all the way to those who arrived on the Mayflower. See the kind of people we rub elbows with? Rosie, however, promises to be equally proud of her Italian heritage, not only because of her father, but also because she chose to come into the world four days ahead of the anticipated date of delivery so that her birthday could fall on the same day on which Rome is said to have been founded in 754 BC. Our best wishes to all three DeBonises, and God's blessings upon them. *(submitted by OmeroSabatini)*.

AMHS MEMBER MADDALENA BOREA CONGRATULATED AT OPERA PARTY



After a season that ended on a high note with rave reviews for its opera "Madama Butterfly," the Washington National Opera had a party on May 22, 2017, honoring singers in its Domingo Cafritz Young Artists program and those who helped in their success.

Maddalena Borea and one of her students

So it was a chance for the young artists to thank their teacher AMHS member Maddalena Borea, and to give her flowers and lots of kisses. Everyone congratulated her on the beautiful job she did teaching her students how to correctly pronounce the Italian words, but more than that, how to give meaning and expression to those words. She also inspires them with a love of opera and gives them a deep understanding of each of these beautiful musical works. During the nearly 20 years she has been with the Opera, Maddalena said she gives a lot of love to her students, along with some of her Italian cooking "because they might be hungry." The WNO is taking their summer break now, but in the fall they will stage Verdi's famous opera "Aida." Performing in Aida will be one of Maddalena's former students, Soloman Howard, who has been making a name for himself in the opera world. Maddalena recalls that Soloman grew up in southeast Washington, began singing in church at a very young age and overcame many obstacles to achieve success. (By the way, the video of Maddalena giving Soloman an Italian lesson is posted on the Kennedy Center website).

After getting noticed by famed tenor Placido Domingo, Soloman joined the Young Artists Group, and eventually had an opportunity to audition for the Metropolitan Opera in New York. Maddalena helped prepare him for his audition. She reminded him that playing the role of the king in Aida meant being really angry at just the right time. When Soloman came back from his successful audition for Aida at the Met, he told Maddalena he really appreciated her help, and he told her that he remembered what she told him, and he said, "Boy, did I get mad!!"

Another one of the promising young artists Maddalena has been working with is Raquel Gonzalez, who performed with Soloman, Renee Fleming and Denyce Graves, among others, at the recent Opera Gala at the Kennedy Center. *(submitted by Nancy DeSanti)*.

INITIATIVES TO PROMOTE THE ITALIAN LANGUAGE AND CULTURE IN THE UNITED STATES

Submitted by Maria LaVerghetta, AMHS Member and Representative to the Greater Washington DC Observatory of the Italian Language

On May 26th, the Italian Embassy in Washington hosted a meeting of the Greater Washington DC Observatory of the Italian language. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss current initiatives to promote the Italian language in the DC area. As the AMHS organization has a compelling interest in the Observatory's goals, the organizers of this event, First Counselor at the Italian Embassy Catherine Flumiani and Scholastic Director at the Italian Embassy Maria Fusco, invited the AMHS to send a representative. The author had the privilege of attending on behalf of the Society and would like to report on what the Embassy is doing to strengthen its initiatives promoting the Italian language and culture in the greater DC area.

At the beginning of the meeting, Counselor Flumiani and Dottoressa Fusco shared with all attendees a strategic plan for the promotion of the Italian language in 2017. The top priority is to increase the numbers of the Advanced Placement (AP) exam. If a world language program offers an AP course and exam, the successful completion of which typically results in college credits, students have an incentive to study that language over another. If Italian programs are to thrive in the greater DC area, high schools need greater numbers of students taking the Italian AP exam. Although there were many ideas discussed about how to generate more interest in taking Italian at the advanced placement level, a few ideas

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stood out as the most effective and feasible for this year. First, throughout the 2017 summer break, Professoressa Anna De Fina of Georgetown University and Professor Giuseppe Falvo of the University of Maryland will begin organizing presentations to high school students for the upcoming school year that will highlight what one can do with the Italian language at the university and beyond. Additionally, there was a consensus that a greater effort should be made to highlight the strong connection between the Italian language and a career in the sciences. As a result, there are also plans to organize presentations by young Italian scientists at high schools to demonstrate the opportunities that proficiency in Italian can yield in the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) field.

In addition to increasing AP exam participation, developing Italian Beginner courses at the elementary and secondary levels is another important priority when it comes to promoting the Italian language in the greater DC area. Students who learn languages at an earlier age generally develop more native-like pronunciation. Moreover, students who enter high school already with a basic understanding of Italian can more easily reach the AP level, thus supporting the Observatory's top priority. Several attendees expressed their belief that exposing boys and girls to Italian opera would ignite a passion for the Italian language and inspire younger students to study Italian. Professor Falvo plans on reaching out to the University of Maryland students who study opera in order to organize a concert featuring Italian opera for children in College Park and the surrounding area, hopefully inspiring these youngsters to choose Italian if offered in their elementary or middle schools.

A third priority is fundraising, particularly for scholarships. The AMHS representative, a 2015-2016 NIAF/AMHS scholarship winner, spoke about how the AMHS-NIAF scholarship enabled her to study at the University of Perugia for Foreigners, an experience that turned her into a more knowledgeable Italian teacher, a more proficient speaker of Italian, and thus a more effective promoter of the Italian language. She expressed the view that, in addition to the AMHS-NIAF scholarship, stakeholders should be looking to create more scholarships for Italian students, specifically for young men and women who want to become Italian teachers. Immersion experiences are invaluable, but their cost discourages many students from pursuing them, which ultimately reduces the number of potential Italian teachers. There is a pressing need for Italian teachers in the greater DC area to meet the growing demands of students who want to study the language.

Lastly, there was discussion of some of the other significant resources, projects and events that will generate general interest in the Italian language and encourage prospective Italian students. AMHS members should mark their calendars for the week of October 16th to October 20th, Italian Language Week, and keep an eye out for the daily events celebrating the Italian language and culture in Washington D.C. Additionally, AMHS parents whose children or grandchildren are studying Italian, or who themselves are interested in taking Italian courses, should check out the website "US Speaks Italian," for

information about studying abroad, scholarships, online courses, and educational resources. The embassy is very interested in feedback on the website and any improvements it can make. AMHS members can direct any comments or questions to the AMHS representative or to Maria D'Andrea, who will pass them on to Counselor Flumiani and Professoressa Fusco.

FUTURE OF CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS CELEBRATION DISCUSSED By Nancy DaSanti

By Nancy DeSanti

On Saturday, May 21, 2017, the leaders of the National Christopher Columbus Association (NCAA) met at Casa Italiana with Father Ezio Marchetto and a group of interested members of Italian-American organizations. Attending on behalf of AMHS were Maria D'Andrea-Yothers, Nancy DeSanti and Joe Lupo. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss ways to preserve the Christopher Columbus holiday, which is celebrated on the second Monday of October but which has been under attack in recent years.

Due in part to a lack of knowledge and the advancement of false historical narratives; state legislatures, city councils, colleges and school boards across the country are being lobbied to remove Columbus Day and in most cases to replace it with Indigenous People's Day or some variation. Unfortunately many of these efforts have been successful - but not all.

Traditionally, NCAA has organized an annual celebration at Union Station with the invaluable participation by the National Park Service, by the Knights of Columbus, by the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), and by the National Italian American Foundation (NIAF), which sponsors a national essay-writing contest in the schools.

NCAA President J.P. McCusker and Secretary Steve Upton noted that an accommodation with Native Americans was desirable. J.P. described in detail the efforts that he and the other officers have made to educate the public, to meet with officials of the various embassies, to include Latino groups, and to reach out to Native American groups. NCAA is getting ready to launch an updated website that will provide a handy reference of talking points and educational materials for both teachers, and students. Father Ezio suggested reaching out to Italian clubs at colleges and universities. Maria suggested trying to involve the young essay-contest winners.

McCusker posed the question: Will Columbus Day survive? He said polls show that most people are supportive of Columbus Day, but the same polls show that a majority have no opinion or little knowledge of the issue. So it is up to all of us to educate the public on the real truths about Columbus.

The bottom line is, besides the admirable efforts of the NCAA officers and members, who devote a lot of their time and energy to this effort, volunteers are needed to help out in areas such as writing, and reaching out to individuals groups to help educate them on preserving the holiday that is so important to our heritage. Also, volunteers are needed to help keep track of

efforts in states, cities and localities to change the Columbus Day holiday, so we have time to act. For example, last year in Baltimore, the City Council voted to keep Columbus Day after NCAA members mobilized. However, state legislatures in Nebraska and Maine are now holding hearings on such legislation.

So if you would like to volunteer to help, please contact NCAA at info@christophercolumbus.org. Some great information can be found on their website www.christophercolumbus.org.

The next Christopher Columbus ceremony in Columbus Plaza at Union Station will be held on Monday, October 9, 2017, and all AMHS members and their friends are cordially invited to attend.



AMHS and other Italian-American Organization members meet with NCAA leaders at Casa Italiana to discuss Columbus Day

SINGER PINO LEVATO PERFORMS AT CASA ITALIANA

By Nancy DeSanti



Sister Ada Grano, Maria Flieri, Nancy DeSanti, Pino Levato, Father Ezio Marchetto, Dora Leo Santacroce

Popular singer Pino Levato came back to Casa Italiana on May 28, 2017, over the Memorial Day weekend, to give us a chance to enjoy the popular and traditional music of Italy. Pino is from a town near Crotone, in Calabria, but in addition to the songs of his region, he sang the beautiful songs of Sicily, Naples and Rome and other regions as well. Some audience members, which included many AMHS members, may recall that Pino was here last July and sang and played the guitar while people sang along and danced. By the way, Pino had invited AMHS member Sergio Fresco to accompany him on the accordion, but unfortunately Sergio was away for the holiday weekend.

While scenes of Italy were projected up front on the screen, the audience listened enthusiastically as Pino sang some of the songs on his CD "Viecchi Ricuordi," including "Le canzoni del passato," "A strine," "Serenata R'Amuri" and "Buonanotte Cosenza."

This year, Pino was again accompanied by Sister Ada Grano, who comes from a town in Calabria about 20 minutes away from his hometown. Sister Ada runs a nursery school in Riverdale, Maryland, and she was collecting donations for a charity that helps women and children victims of domestic violence.

Their friend Maria Flieri, a new choir member who also teaches at Casa Italiana, gave an impassioned plea at the end of the Italian Mass, about the need to fight the domestic violence that unfortunately is widespread in Italy, particularly in the South, and which is only now just beginning to be talked about and dealt with openly.

If you missed the chance to buy Pino's CD or would like to make a donation to the charity, please contact Maria Flieri on any Sunday at Casa Italiana. or Sister Ada, 4805 Queensbury Road, Riverdale, MD. 20737

PERFUMES REFLECT ITALIAN CREATIVITY

By Nancy DeSanti



A recent Italian Cultural Institute event had the very interesting topic of perfumes as the artistic heritage of Italian creativity. Held at the Italian Embassy on June 1, 2017, the speaker was the well-known perfumer Laura Bosetti Tonatto, who has created fragrances for Queen Elizabeth and the King of Saudi Arabia, as well as top design houses. Without a doubt, nobody who listened to Laura's talk will never look at perfume in the same way. She told us that "the nose" is something she was born with which enabled her to distinguish scents, but she developed an interest in perfumes when she visited the souks in Cairo. She showed us how the components of a perfume are broken down into the *testa, cuore* and *fondo*, although actually a perfume can be made from as few as two ingredients—rose and one other ingredient. She passed around perfume sticks as she described each perfume and demonstrated with slides.

Her fascinating talk helped the audience gain a real appreciation of what goes into the creating and making of a perfume. For example, she said the best (and most expensive) ingredient is the damascena rose which comes from Taef in Saudi Arabia and which costs \$50,000 a kilo. She added that very good roses also come from Morocco and Bulgaria. She told us she was invited to come to Saudi Arabia and develop a perfume and actually stayed at the royal palace in Medina. She said she found out you can tell if someone is close to the king if they wear special perfume. I guess that's what you call a limited edition!!

Explaining where she gets her inspiration, she said important works of art have inspired her perfumes, and she is thus able to transform artistic suggestions into fragrances. As to where she gets her inspiration specifically, Laura said she is inspired by paintings (such as Botticelli's Birth of Venus), films (such as Il Gattopardo) and even music. She used a Caravaggio painting to inspire her to create a perfume for the famous Hermitage State Museum in St. Petersburg, Russia, for example. She told us that the Hermitage is so vast that if you stand in front of a painting for one minute, it would take 10 years to go through the whole museum. Incredible!!

She also found inspiration in the Bible, and told us about the perfumes she created after reading passages in the Bible and using sandalwood and olive wood, ending up with a scent that resembled incense.

She noted that she sees connecting her perfumes to works of art in Italy as a way of highlighting the Italian culture, and she travels all over the world giving exhibits and talks on that connection. Pointing out the visceral feelings brought out by scents, she said that the chances are that we remember the scent our grandmothers and mothers wore, more so than their clothes.

Laura even gave us some tips for applying perfume, such as on the ankles and wrists, near blood vessels, rather than on the neck, and she advised storing perfume away from heat and light to make it last a long time. To get a good night's sleep, she suggested putting two drops of perfume on the pillow.

At the end of her talk, Laura answered questions from the audience and invited us to visit her profumeria in Rome. Her next project is a perfume to be called "Italia."

FROM THE REGIONAL CORNER

Every year, a list is drawn up by the *Borghi più belli d'Italia* organization, which selects the 20 villages to promote in each region, chosen for their landscape, heritage and culture. In

addition, 2017 has been named as the year of the village by Italy's Ministry of Culture, as the country turns the spotlight on its hidden gems and encourages more diverse tourist itineraries. This year, the list includes Rocca San Giovanni as the village in Abruzzo and Vastogirardi as the village in Molise.

ROCCA SAN GIOVANNI, PROVINCE OF CHIETI, REGION OF ABRUZZO

By Nancy DeSanti

There are many ancient walls, churches and towers to be found in the picturesque hillside town of Rocca San Giovanni but one of the main attractions is the beautiful view across the Adriatic Sea.

Rocca San Giovanni has approximately 2,284 inhabitants, known as roccolani. It is located northeast of Lanciano and is situated on a rocky hill facing the "*costa dei trabocchi*."

This small village in the province of Chieti, placed on top of a rocky hill between the river mouth of the river Sangro and the stream Feltrino, The history of the village can be traced back to at least 1046. In 1061, the Norman wall was built, but it was mostly destroyed by an earthquake in 1626, although the remains of the wall can still be seen.

Rocca San Giovanni was mentioned for the first time in a document of 1047 of the Emperor Henry III, addressed to the monastery of San Giovanni in Venere. In 1076, the Abbot Oderisio I had the center fortified to protect the inhabitants and the monks and named it Rocca San Giovanni.

In more recent times, there was a mass exodus at the beginning of the 20^{th} century to the United States, Canada, Argentina and Australia. In 1943, the Nazis destroyed the four-sided quadrangular tower.



Rocca San Giovanni Municipal Building

Besides the remains of fortifications and the tower, visitors should not miss the medieval Church of St. Matthew, which dates back to 1200. It features one major nave and two aisles, divided by lancet arches, and avisible roofing. Inside it preserves masterpieces of art such as a fresco depicting "The Last Supper" by Amedeo Trivisonno and a painting of the Madonna and Child by the Byzantine school. In the 14th and 15th centuries, a bell tower was added. Also, the Town Hall, built in the 14th century, features an exhibition of an interesting collection of contemporary art.

The maritime area of Rocca San Giovanni overlooks the "*costa dei trabocchi*," which is characterized by the presence of the old-style and new *trabocchi*, a wooden fishing structure that juts out into the sea.

Another interesting feature at the outskirts of the village is the "Zoo Safari d'Abruzzo," a project begun in 2000. The zoo is home to varieties of zebras, kangaroos, elephants, crocodiles, tigers, lions and other wildlife species. But the zoo may be best known for its "liger" (*leonitigri*) cubs—a cross between a male lion and a female tiger. Ligers enjoy swimming, which is a characteristic of tigers, and are sociable like lions, but ligers typically grow larger and stronger than either parent species.

With all there is to see and do, Rocca San Giovanni sounds like an ideal vacation spot.

What to See

- Zoo d'Abruzzo
- Church of St. Matthew (Chiesa di San Matteo Apostolo)
- 14th century historical center
- Foce Beaches (Spiagge de la Foce)

Important Dates

• September 21: Feast of St. Matthew, the patron saint

Sources:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rocca San Giovanni http://www.localidautore.com/paesi/rocca-san-giovanni-1836 http://borghipiubelliditalia.it/project/rocca-san-giovanni/

ROCCA SAN GIOVANNI, PROVINCIA DI CHIETI, REGIONE ABRUZZO

Translation by Maddalena Borea, AMHS Member

Antiche mura, chiese e torri sono alcune delle attrazioni di Rocca San Giovanni, cittadina che sorge tra la foce del fiume Sangro e il ruscello Feltrino. L'attrazione principale, però, è la magnifica vista del Mare Adriatico.

Rocca San Giovanni, nella provincia di Chieti, conta circa 2,300 abitanti, i quali sono conosciuti come Roccolani. Situata a Nord Est di Lanciano, si estende in un'area collinosa di fronte alla "Costa dei Trabocchi".

I suoi primi documenti storici risalgono al 1046, e abbiamo notizia di un muro normanno eretto a Rocca San Giovanni nell'anno 1061. Sfortunatamente detto muro fu raso al suolo dal terremoto del 1626. Si parla, inoltre,di Rocca San Giovanni in un documento inviato dall'Imperatore Enrico III al Monastero di San Giovanni in Venere. Nel 1076 l'Abate Odorisio l ordinò la fortificazione del centro per la protezione degli abitanti e dei monaci, e fu allora che cambiò il nome della citta' in Rocca San Giovanni.

In tempi più recenti s'è verificato un vero e proprio esodo di molti abitanti di Rocca San Giovanni verso gli Stati Uniti, il Canada e l'America Latina. Molti si sono diretti anche in Australia. Nel 1943 i Nazisti abbatterono e distrussero una delle sue bellissime torri.

A parte le rovine delle sue fortificazioni e della sua torre, i turisti dovrebbero visitare soprattutto la Chiesa di San Matteo che risale all'anno 1200. La navata principale e le arcate di tale chiesa sono piene di opere d'arte, fra le quali un affresco del Cenacolo di Amedeo Trivisonno, e un dipinto della Madonna con Bambino di una scuola di Arte Bizantina. Nel secolo quindicesimo la chiesa ricevè anche un magnifico Campanile. Il palazzo del Comune, costruito nel quattordicesimo secolo, offre esempi di arte contemporanea.

Interessantissimo è anche lo zoo Safari della citta', progetto iniziato nell'anno 2000.. Lo zoo ospita elefanti, zebre, canguri, tigri, leoni, coccodrilli e altri animali. L'attrazione maggiore dello zoo è offerta dai leontigri, un incrocio tra un leone maschio e una tigre femmina. Questi animali amano nuotare, che e' una caratteristica della tigre, e amano essere socievoli, che è una caratteristica del leone. I leontigri, però, sono più grandi e più forti dei loro genitori.

Poichè questa citta' ha tanto da offrire al turista, è un' ottima oasi di villeggiatura.

Attrazioni del luogo

- Zoo Safari d'Abruzzo
- La Chiesa di San Matteo
- Il centro Storico del quattordicesimo secolo
- Le spiagge della foce.

Date da ricordare

• 21 settembre: Festa di San Matteo, il santo patrono

VASTOGIRARDI, PROVINCE OF ISERNIA, REGION OF MOLISE

By Nancy DeSanti

With just 800 inhabitants Vastogirardi has been home to shepherds and farmers for many centuries. Remote and peaceful, it's a perfect rural escape while you can see the remains of walls and ancient religious structures.

The village is located about 40 kilometers northwest of Campobasso, close to Agnonse and Roccasicura. Located near the springs of the Tigno River, Vastogirardi was already inhabited at the time of the Samnites, and not far from the center there are remains of walls and a sacred area going back centuries before Christ.

Vastogirardi is full of pastures and for this reason was always used by shepherds and cattle breeders since ancient times. In fact, along the tratturo "Celano-Foggia," crossing the area of Vastogirardi, there are still many stone constructions in the typical "tholos" form used as shelters by the shepherds.



Vastogirardi town center

Under the Lombards, and later the Normans, the castle became the center of village life, and the fortified borough with only two entrance doors still exists. The village's name probably derives from the name of the feudal lord Giusto Girardi.

One of the village's main attractions is its medieval castle, which was a stronghold of government functions, both civil and religious. Another notable attraction is the church dedicated to its patron saint, San Nicola di Bari. It is located in the fortified highest point, as if symbolizing the religious power.

Another noteworthy church is dedicated to Santa Maria delle Grazie, which is decorated with ornamental columns and numerous beautiful statues, including one of the Madonna delle Grazie at the main altar.

Vastogirardi's natural environment is one of its best features, with its woods, natural springs, magnificent foliage and ancient beech trees .

Throughout the years, the village has maintained its traditions, such as the celebration on January 17 of the feast of Sant'Antonio Abate. The event draws thousands of visitors for the fireworks and the chance to taste the delicious local dishes such as the *re muócche*, polenta with sausage and pancetta, and *foglie e patane* made with potatoes and savory cabbage (verza).

Another popular celebration takes place on July 2, the feast of Santa Maria delle Grazie. An "angel" (actually a child), dressed in a costume, is suspended by wires from a balcony to the façade of the church. Four times the angel flies over the piazza—the first time to recite a prayer, the second time bearing a gift, the third time with incense, and the fourth time scattering flower petals over the statue and the faithful.

With its natural beautify and proud traditions, Vastogirardi sounds like a wonderful destination.

- The Italic Samnite Temple (Tempio Sannitico)
- Natural Reserve (Riservi di Montedimezzo), nature and wildlife areas
- Castle: built between 10th and 11th century (actually it is a fortified borough)
- Church of San Nicola, the ancient parish church inside the fortified borough

Important Dates

- January 17: Falò in honor of Sant'Antonio Abate
- May 21: Feast of San Felice da Cantalice
- June 13: Feast of Sant'Antonio da Padova
- July 2: Feast of Santa Maria delle Grazie
- December 6: Feast of San Nicola, the patron saint

Sources:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vastogirardi http://www.comune.vastogirardi.is.it/

VASTOGIRARDI, PROVINCIA DI ISERNIA, REGIONE MOLISE

Translation by Maddalena Borea

Questo villaggio di soli 800 abitanti è da secoli dimora di pastori e di contadini. Remoto e tranquillo, è una perfetta oasi campestre, che vanta anche una storia antichissima, a giudicare da rovine di antiche mura e di strutture di antiche religioni.

È a circa 40 chilometri da Campobasso, il Capoluogo, e poco distante da Agnonse e Roccasicuta e dalle sorgenti del fiume Tigno. La sua storia risale ai tempi dei Sanniti, e le sue mura e le sue rovine risalgono ad alcuni secoli prima della venuta di Cristo.

I pascoli circostanti testimoniano l'antica presenza di pastori e di allevatori di bovini, e lungo il tratturo Celano-Foggia ancora si vedono testimonianze dei loro spostamenti dalle montagne al mare, e delle strutture usate dai pastori stessi come ripari dagli elementi.

Durante la dominazione dei Longobardi e poi dei Normanni il bellissimo castello di Vastogirardi era il centro della vita sociale del villaggio, e veniva usato come centro di funzioni civili e religiose. Sono ancora visibili le sue due uniche porte.

Il nome Vastogirardi probabilmente derivera' dal nome del feudatario Giusto Girardi. Interessante e bellissima è anche una delle sue chiese dedicata al suo Santo Patrono, San Nicola di Bari. Questa chiesa si trova nella parte piu' fortificata del paese, quasi a simboleggiare la forza religiosa.

Un'altra bellissima chiesa e' quella dedicata a Santa Maria delle Grazie, con colonne ornamentali, e bellissime statue, fra le quali quella della Madonna delle Grazie sull'altare Maggiore. Le piu' grandi bellezze del luogo sono quelle naturali: le sue foreste, le sue sorgenti, i faggi maestosi.

What to See

La piccola comunita' ancora oggi mantiene le sue antiche tradizioni, come la festa di Sant'Antonio Abate il 17 gennaio. L'evento richiama molti visitatori per l'assaggio di leccornie locali, come la polenta con salsiccia e pancetta e la minestra di verza e patate.

Questa festivita' si conclude poi con fuochi artificiali. Un'altra festa locale, quella di Santa Maria delle Grazie ha luogo il 2 luglio. In tale occasione un angelo, in effetti un bambino, in antico costume locale, mantenuto da fili metallici, è sospeso ad un balcone della facciata principale della Chiesa. Quest'angelo vola quattro volte attraverso la piazza; la prima volta recita una preghiera, la seconda porta un dono, la terza volta passa con l'incenso e la quarta volta lancia petali floreali sulla statua della Madonna e sulla folla.

Con le sue bellezze naturali e le sue antiche tradizioni, Questa cittadina e' definitivamente un luogo da visitare.

Le attrazioni del luogo

- L'antico tempio sannitico
- Le riserve naturali di Montedimezzo e la Fauna
- Il castello costruito fra il decimo e l'undicesimo secolo,

Date da ricordare

- 17 gennaio: I falò' in onore di Sant'Antonio Abate
- 21 maggio: festa di San Felice da Cantalice
- 13 giugno: festa di Sant'Antonio di Padova
- 2 luglio: festa di Santa Maria delle Grazie
- 6 dicembre: festa di San Nicola, Santo Patrono

SHOW YOUR AMHS PRIDE!

By Sarah Scott, AMHS Board Member

We are excited to announce that AMHS has new t-shirts available for our membership. These custom shirts were recently released for sale at the Italian Festival on September 11, 2016 and were a big hit. Additionally, we now have available the AMHS Tote Bag.

We will offer these and our other AMHS logo items (see order form on page 12) for sale at our upcoming events. You can also order these items online, from the AMHS website, at http://www.abruzzomoliseheritagesociety.org/amhsshop/#!for m/shopping, or by mail by sending a check, made payable to AMHS, and send to AMHS c/o Sarah Scott, 5108 Donovan Drive, #105, Alexandria, VA 22304. (For t-shirt orders by post (mail), please be sure to include your name, shirt size, and gender.



AMHS Men's T-Shirt

Material: 50% cotton/50% polyester. Sizes: S/M/L/XL Price: \$25 + \$4.50 postage and handling



AMHS Women's T-Shirt

Material: 60% cotton/40% polyester. Sizes: S/M/L/XL Price: \$25 + \$4.50 postage and handling



NEW! AMHS Tote Bag

17"W x 6"D x 13 1/2"H; bottom 12"W; handle drop 9" Price: \$40 each + \$5.75 for shipping and handling

A Cutinary Journey TRADITIONAL CUISINE OF ABRUZZO AND MOLLSE A Selection of Recipes	"Traditional Cuisine of Abruzzo and Molise: A Selection of Recipes" , 2 nd Printing illustrated, November 2015 PRICE: \$10.00 + \$5.75 per book for postage and handling = \$15.75 NAME: ADDRESS:				
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FOR MERCHANDISE PAYMENT - *CHECK MADE PAYABLE TO AMHS* - **SEND TO:** Sarah Scott, 5108 Donovan Drive, #105, Alexandria, VA 22304

AMHS MAY 21, 2017 GENERAL SOCIETY MEETING - CARMINE'S RESTAURANT



Top (left and right): AMHS member and guest speaker Domenica Marchetti with Carmine James Spellane, Sarah Scott, Barbara Friedman, and Peter Bell. **Top (right):** AMHS members Tom and Cindy Savage, Barbara and Ray Bernero, and Francesco Isgro.

Middle (left): AMHS members Maria, Ray, and Michele LaVerghetta. Middle (right): Newlyweds Barbara and Ray Bernero.

Bottom (left): Rocco Caniglia congratulates Rocco DelMonaco on his birthday. **Bottom (right):** Helen Free and Maria D'Andrea-Yothers. *(photos courtesy of Joe Novello)*

THE ABRUZZO AND MOLISE HERITAGE SOCIETY

Celebrating Italian Culture & Community since 2000





الله LUNCHEON MEETING ک

of the Washington, DC Area

Author Katherine Wilson **Presents** "Only in Naples"

When: SUNDAY, JULY 23, 2017 **Time:** 1:00 p.m. Location: Casa Italiana 595 Third Street, NW Washington, DC

MENU: Prepared by Osteria da Nino and includes appetizers (arancini di riso and cavolini di bruxelles croccante), mixed salad, pollo al funghi & florio Marsala, orecchiette salsiccio & broccoli rabe, arborio risotto con asparagi & piselli, homemade focaccia bread, and Sicilian cannoli. Beverages are included.

COST: \$20.00 members; \$25.00 non-members.

WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO PAY ONLINE (USING VISA OR MASTERCARD) AT WWW.ABRUZZOMOLISEHERITAGESOCIETY.ORG (SEE ICON ON THE HOME PAGE FOR "UPCOMING EVENTS"). **ADVANCE PAYMENT DUE BY JULY 19. NO PAYMENTS AT THE DOOR**

Please come and join us to hear the amazing story of how our speaker, Katherine Wilson, as a young American college grad, came to fall in love with her adopted city of Naples, after a summer abroad turned into a love affair with a local guy, his family - including his glamorous, wise mother - and the chaotic, vibrant city of Napoli. Copies of her very funny, insightful book will be available for signing. Lunch will be catered by one of everybody's favorites, Osteria da Nino. We will also have a raffle, the proceeds of which support the AMHS/NIAF scholarships.

For information, please contact Nancy DeSanti (703) 967-2169.

×------Return with Payment

PAID RESERVATIONS for AMHS General Society Meeting on Sunday, July 23, 2017

Please make check payable to AMHS. Send to AMHS, c/o Peter Bell, 328 8th Street, N.E., Washington, DC 20002

NAME(S): ______Phone: _____

GUEST(S): _____

Number Attending: Check Amount: Email:



www.abruzzomoliseheritagesociety.org



FERRAGOSTO PICNIC SUNDAY, AUGUST 13, 2017

FORT WARD PARK, ALEXANDRIA, VA 3:00 PM – 7:00 PM

Please join the Abruzzo and Molise Heritage Society (AMHS) for its annual *Ferragosto Picnic*. This year, we are hosting the picnic at Area 2 of Fort Ward Park in Alexandria, VA, at a new time, 3:00pm - 7:00pm. We are very fortunate to have reserved a shelter (covered pavilion) with 9 large picnic tables and one grill.

Food and Drink

- > Bring your own picnic basket of food, along with paper products, utensils, and table covers (if you want)
- Soft drinks, bottled water, and ice provided by AMHS. Note that due to restrictions of our ABC license, alcohol is limited to beer in kegs and wine, which will be provided by AMHS. Beer can only be drunk out of plastic cups
- One public grill is reserved (charcoal provided by AMHS). You may bring your own portable charcoal grill only; no gas grills

Other Information

- Bring Italian cards to play
- ➢ For your personal convenience, bring lawn chairs, card tables, blankets, etc.
- > There is a playground within walking distance of the pavilion
- > There are two enclosed restrooms within a 4 minute walk from the pavilion area

Address

Fort Ward Museum and Historic Site

4301 West Braddock Road Alexandria, Virginia 22304

Parking

There is ample parking in front of the picnic area and throughout the park. Note that vehicles must be parked in designated paved areas; parking is prohibited on the grass. Look for signs for Abruzzo and Molise Heritage Society Ferragosto Picnic.

This event is free. All are welcome!

For information & to RSVP, contact Maria D'Andrea-Yothers (703) 473-4033



4669 Lawton Way, #104 Alexandria, VA 22311

AMHS NOTIZIARIO

Romeo Sabatini, Editor Maria D'Andrea, co-Editor Nancy DeSanti, Contributing Writer

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You may choose to receive the *Notiziario* by electronic mail (email) only. This will save on paper and postage and will allow you to get your copy more quickly. If you wish to receive the newsletter by online delivery only, please contact Maria D'Andrea-Yothers by email at

president@abruzzomoliseheritagesociety.org by phone, (703) 998-6097. Thank you for considering this option.

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